

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STAFF NOTE

Review Item:

Statewide System of Assistance to Low Performing Schools - The Voluntary Partnership Assistance Team (VPAT) Option – Gallatin and Madison Counties

Applicable Statute or Regulation:

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)

History/Background:

Existing Policy. Voluntary Partnership Assistance Teams (VPAT) are one of three options the state made available to districts who had reached the Tier 3 level of consequences under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). The other two options are State Assistance Teams (SAT) and Network Assistance Teams (NAT). (A chart of the three options is attached at the end of this staff note). These three options make up the state's system of support as required by NCLB for districts falling into this level of consequence. Tier 3 districts have failed to meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) for four years. There are currently 44 districts in Kentucky in Tier 3.

In the fall of 2005, the Kentucky Department of Education, Kentucky School Boards Association (KSBA) and the Kentucky Association of School Superintendents (KASS) developed the VPAT intervention model with the intention of piloting it with several districts before the Tier 3 consequences took effect. The model is called "voluntary" because the district volunteers to accept the extensive involvement and scrutiny and support of a team of people who will engage with the district leader, school board, community and schools within the district. The intervention provides the local district with an intensive, collaborative, assistance process designed to build capacity at the district and school levels and provide essential support and oversight for immediate and sustained improved student achievement.

VPAT membership is comprised of a five-person team that assists the district in reviewing its needs and developing an improvement plan to address those needs. Each team consists of the district superintendent (who acts as team leader), a KASS mentor for the superintendent, a KSBA local school board mentor, a Highly Skilled Educator, and a KDE staff member. While this base team was required, districts could choose to add membership if they felt it met their circumstances.

Districts that were trending toward Tier 3 were given the opportunity to volunteer for the pilot phase of this program. Seven districts responded and were accepted into the pilot: Christian County, Fulton County, Gallatin County, Lawrence County, Madison County, Monroe County, and Russellville Independent. These districts all became Tier 3 districts after release of the 2006

NCLB Reports. Since districts remain in Tier 3 status until the district makes AYP for two consecutive years, all seven will remain in Tier 3 status until at least the release of next year's NCLB scores (August 2008).

After evaluation of the pilot phase, the program became a permanent option in the state's system of support. There are currently 24 districts in the VPAT program. The remaining Tier 3 districts include 13 SAT districts, and 7 NAT districts.

Teams from Gallatin and Madison Counties will be at the June meeting to present to the Board on their VPAT experiences.

Impact on Getting to Proficiency:

The VPAT program has proved to be a valuable resource to the district leadership in Gallatin County and Madison County in closing achievement gaps and reaching adequate yearly progress and the larger goal of reaching proficiency by 2014. Both districts have seen improvements in student performance and in the culture in their districts.

Contact Person:

Stephen Schenck, Associate Commissioner
Office of Leadership and School Improvement
502/564-2116
Stephen.Schenck@education.ky.gov

Johnnie Grissom, Associate Commissioner
Office of Special Instructional Services
502/564-4970
Johnnie.Grissom@education.ky.gov

Deputy Commissioner

Interim Commissioner of Education

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